

Arizona Adult Education Assessment Requirements PY 2007-2008

State Context for Assessment

Overview

The assessment requirements in this document provide a detailed explanation of the state and local program responsibilities for assessment specific to the National Reporting System (NRS) and state requirements. These requirements apply to the approved assessments that programs must use to report educational gains in compliance with NRS requirements.

Programs must adhere to the assessment requirements identified in order to provide fair and equitable access to services for learners, make decisions about the program, identify the need for program improvement, and make consistent judgments about learner placement and advancement.

NRS requirements and accountability

The use of reliable and valid learner assessments is basic to any functioning assessment requirement. An assessment is considered **valid** *if it has been determined to accurately measure the skills and abilities that it claims to measure*. An assessment is considered **reliable** *if it can consistently measure the skills and abilities of all learners for which the assessment was designed*.

Arizona's adult education assessment requirement requires the uniform implementation and administration of valid and reliable assessment instruments that align to the NRS levels to document achievement. Uniform implementation of assessment procedures benefits the learner, the program and the State by ensuring and enabling:

- Accurate and standardized learner placement into appropriate instructional levels.
- Genuine comparison of program, teacher, and learner success.
- Identification of program service areas that are in need of improvement.
- Creation of a basis for selecting state sponsored Professional Development activities.
- Creation of a basis for informing instruction that aligns with state standards.

By requiring the uniform implementation and administration of valid and reliable assessments, the state of Arizona will generate data that allows both reporting on program performance accurately and targeting instruction to demonstrated specific needs of adult learners.

Purpose and uses of assessment

Programs should understand that use of the standardized assessments for reporting purposes differ from instructional functions when using results of standardized assessments. Reporting functions of assessment include:

- Setting uniform program performance standards,
- Establishing a uniform basis for performance based funding awards,
- Measuring uniform gains in learner knowledge, and
- Comparing the success of programs in meeting performance standards.

Instructional functions of assessment include:

- Determining the effectiveness of instruction,
- Determining the specific needs of adult learners, and
- Identifying statewide professional development needs.

ADE/AES encourages programs and individual instructors to use supplemental assessments to aid in identifying learner needs and guiding instruction. These alternate assessments, however, no matter how

useful as a supplement for informing instruction, may not substitute for the standardized instruments prescribed for NRS reporting and educational gain measurement.

Summary

So that ADE/AES operations can be aligned with assessment objectives, all adult education programs funded by the state of Arizona must use the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for ABE and ASE level and high level ELAA learners and the BEST Literacy test for ELAA learners. Local programs' assessment procedures must follow the publisher's guidelines and the established state requirement. Programs must pre-test all learners within the first 12 hours of instruction and must follow up with a post-test during the period allowed under state requirement as described in this document. Uniform implementation of the assessment procedures outlined here is necessary for the successful comparison of program efforts and will be monitored by ADE/AES. Deviance from the requirements and procedures outlined here will be seen as a compliance issue.

Direct questions on assessment requirements and procedure or requests for technical assistance to:

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General Assessment Requirements

ABE/ASE Level Learners

Learners to be assessed

Local eligible providers must use a State approved assessment to measure the educational gain of all learners, *including distance learning learners*, who receive 12 hours or more of instruction. The assessment to be used was selected by Arizona Department of Education, Adult Education Services (ADE/AES) from a list approved by the United States Department of Education Secretary for use in the National Reporting System (NRS).

Assessments permitted

Effective October 1, 2007, the TABE Survey form for versions 7/8 and 9/10 and TABE PC are approved for use as the NRS measures of Educational Gains for all ABE and ASE level learners in Arizona, including those enrolled in distance learning.

Timelines

Testing timelines reflect recommendations issued by test publisher CTB McGraw Hill, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), and the NRS:

- Initial assessment must be completed during the first 12 hours after registration;
- Progress testing must not occur before 60 attendance hours or 60 calendar days of taking the initial test.
- Exceptions to the above progress testing timeline may occur only under the following conditions:
 - The learner indicates to program personnel that s/he must step out of the program for at least 90 calendar days before attaining 60 hours of attendance, or
 - Professional judgment by the instructor indicates that the learner has made exceptional and verifiable progress before 60 attendance hours or 60 calendar days, and that progress is documented in the learner file, or
 - The class closes before 60 hours of instruction are delivered, and

- All exceptions are documented on a “Progress Assessment Exception Form” (developed by Arizona Department of Education/Adult Education Services (ADE/AES)) and are signed by the learner, and
- The original signed form is filed with learner records and is available for monitoring by AAES.
- If a learner returns to the program before 90 days of inactivity have elapsed, it is not necessary to administer a new initial assessment.
- Learners with continuous attendance that crosses fiscal year can be counted in both years. The initial test, along with attendance hours through June 30, would be counted in the first fiscal year. The progress test and attendance hours would be counted in the next fiscal year. If the progress test showed an advancement or Educational Gain, it would be counted in the new fiscal year.

Assessment practices

The TABE is a standardized assessment. Validity and reliability must be maintained through a standardized delivery process; test administration must not deviate from the procedures described by the publisher, CTB McGraw Hill.

- Program personnel can administer the TABE tests only after receiving training from ADE/AES personnel and reading the appropriate manual (forms 7/8: *Survey, Examiners Manual*; forms 9/10: *Survey, Test Directions*).
- ADE/AES will maintain a list of assessment training attendees and the programs for which they work.
- Program Directors will submit list of personnel administering assessments to learners to ADE/AES as part of their annual report.
- Programs must administer all initial and progress assessments to all learners, *including distance learning learners*, in person at a proctored program site. Assessments not conducted through face-to-face interaction with a trained test administrator in a secure setting are not allowed for NRS reporting.
- TABE tests must not interrupt instruction.
- TABE tests may be given either individually or in a group.
- Assessment must be completed as soon as possible after registration in order to determine learner placement.
- Assessment results, combined with other evaluative information, must be used to direct individual learner studies.
- Programs should expect to be monitored for compliance with standard assessment processes.

Learners must be given a TABE Locator test to determine which level of the TABE Survey is appropriate for initial testing. The Locator may not be used for placement or progress testing purposes.

Note: Occasionally the Locator Test indicates inappropriate levels for learners. Assessment personnel and instructors should be aware that scores are most reliable for diagnostic and instructional purposes when they fall near the middle of the distribution of scores (40-75% correct). Those whose scale scores are near the high end of the test may know more than the test allowed them to demonstrate. Similarly, those whose scale scores are near the low end may give little information about the learner's skills.

- Learner placement will follow the NRS guidelines for the TABE. For NRS reporting purposes, learner's initial placement level will be determined by the lowest scale score.
- Scale scores must be used to measure educational gains and to report learner advancement across educational functioning levels. Level advancement is determined when the learner's progress test scale score places him or her into a level above the initial placement. For learners whose lowest initial score places them into ASE II, successfully passing the GED test is the only way to report an educational gain.

- Learners must be assessed as soon as possible after registration in each of the content areas in which they will receive instruction in order to determine placement. Learners may be given one or a combination of the Reading, Language Arts and Math tests. ABE and ASE learners must be given a TABE Locator Test to determine the appropriate TABE Survey Test level.
- Learner demographic, assessment, goal preference, goal attainment, and attendance information must be entered monthly, as appropriate, to reflect current learner activity.

Accommodations and adaptations in assessment

Help for people with learning disabilities and difficulties can take two forms: accommodations and adaptations. If a learner has a documented learning disability, it is generally in his or her interest to present the documentation to the program before assessment has taken place so that an appropriate *accommodation* can be made.

If, on the other hand, the learner does not have a documented disability but has discovered that he or she learns best through some adaptation of the instructional environment, that should also be made known to the program before the initial assessment takes place so that the *adaptation* can be made and accurate placement information can be obtained.

- Accommodations will be made for learners with documented learning disabilities and must be applied in conformance with the publisher's guidelines. Learners may document disability through professional evaluative documents from a psychologist, physician or school records.
- Adaptations for learners with learning difficulties may be given upon request and without a learning disabilities diagnosis. Suitable adaptations are colored transparent overlays, clear transparent overlays and a highlighter, temporary adhesives with spatial directions, earplugs, large print test edition (if available), magnifying device, priority seating, hats or caps to minimize the effects of fluorescent lighting, or an unmarked straightedge. Arizona Adult Education Services office will provide technical assistance to programs requesting help in determining appropriate adaptations.

Score ranges and placement for the TABE

Below are the score ranges tied to educational functioning levels for placement and reporting gains

Level	Reading	Language	Math
ABE Beginning Literacy (BL)	160-367	235-389	160-313
ABE Beginning Basic Education (ABE 1)	368-460	390-490	314-441
ABE Low Intermediate (ABE 2)	461-517	491-523	442-505
ABE High Intermediate (ABE 3)	518-566	524-559	06-565
Low Adult Secondary Education (ASE 1)	567-595	560-585	566-594
High Adult Secondary Education (ASE 2)	596-812	586-826	596-775

Any test given after the initial test is called a progress test. A learner may have multiple progress tests. Arizona advancements and NRS educational gains are determined by comparing the learner's initial assessment with the appropriate alternate form of the same level test. Per publisher's guidelines, TABE 7 and 8 are appropriate alternate tests; TABE 9 and 10 are appropriate alternate tests. TABE 7 or 8 may not be combined with TABE 9 or 10. For example, if a learner was originally tested with the TABE 7M, his first

progress test must be the TABE 8M. However, any test administered 181 or more days after a previous test *may* be the same (e.g. initial test with TABE 9D and progress test with TABE 9D).

Training

- ADE/AES staff will provide pre-service and in-service assessment training either in groups or one-on-one. ADE/AES will provide at least two group assessment trainings during each program year. During program year 2007-2008, these trainings will be held at the Adult Education Conference in December and at the Arizona Department of Education office in the late spring.
- Training will be provided to staff who either administer or score each of the tests used to measure educational gains.
- Additional training will be provided for teachers and other local staff involved in gathering, analyzing, compiling and reporting data.
- Training procedures and materials developed by ADE/AES will be used to train staff on
 - NRS requirement, accountability requirements, and the data collection process,
 - definitions of measures, and
 - standardized processes for conducting assessments.

Pre-service and in-service staff training on assessment practices and uses is to be provided primarily by Arizona Adult Education Services and supported by training from local program trainers.

ELAA Learners

Learners to be assessed

Local eligible providers must measure the educational gain of all learners who receive 12 hours or more of instruction in the Arizona Adult Education System (AAES). This measurement must be made with a test approved by the United States Department of Education Secretary for use in the NRS.

Assessments permitted

Effective October 1, 2007, the *BEST Literacy* and *BEST Literacy Skills* tests are approved assessments for use as the *National Reporting System (NRS)* measures of Educational Gains for ELAA learners in Arizona.

Timelines

Testing timelines reflect recommendations issued by The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and NRS:

- Initial assessment must be completed during the first 12 hours after registration;
- Progress testing must occur at least 60 attendance hours or 60 calendar days after taking the initial test.
- Exceptions to the above progress testing timeline may occur only under the following conditions:
 - The learner indicates to program personnel that s/he must step out of the program for at least 90 calendar days before attaining 60 hours of attendance, or
 - Professional judgment by the instructor indicates that the learner has made exceptional and verifiable progress before 60 attendance hours or 60 calendar days, and that progress is documented in the learner file, or
 - The class closes before 60 hours of instruction are delivered, and
 - The exception is documented on a "Progress Assessment Exception Form" (developed by Arizona Department of Education/Adult Education Services (ADE/AES)) and is signed by the learner, and
 - The original signed form is filed with learner records and is available for monitoring by ADE/AES.
- If a learner returns to the program before 90 days of inactivity have elapsed, it is not necessary to administer a new initial assessment.

- Learners with continuous attendance that crosses fiscal year can be counted in both years. The initial test, along with attendance hours through June 30, would be counted in the first fiscal year. The progress test and attendance hours would be counted in the next fiscal year. If the progress test showed an advancement or Educational Gain, it would be counted in the new fiscal year.

Assessment practices

The BEST Literacy is a standardized assessment. Validity and reliability must be maintained through a standardized delivery process; test administration must not deviate from the procedures described by the publisher, CAL.

- Program personnel can administer the BEST Literacy test only after receiving training from ADE/AES personnel and reading the BEST Literacy Test Manual.
- ADE/AES will maintain a list of assessment training attendees and the programs for which they work.
- Program Directors will submit list of personnel administering assessments to learners to ADE/AES as part of their annual report.
- Programs must administer all initial and progress assessments to all learners in person at a proctored program site. Assessments not conducted through face-to-face interaction with a trained test administrator in a secure setting are not allowed for NRS reporting.
- Assessment must not interrupt instruction.
- BEST Literacy tests may be given either individually or in a group.
- Assessment must be completed as soon as possible after registration in order to determine learner placement.
- Assessment results, combined with other evaluative information, must be used to direct individual learner studies.
- Programs should expect to be monitored for compliance with standard assessment processes.
- Learner placement will follow the NRS guidelines for the BEST Literacy. For NRS reporting purposes, the learner's initial placement level will be determined by their lowest scale score.
- Scale scores must be used to measure educational gains and to report learner advancement across educational functioning levels. Level advancement is determined when the learner's progress test scale score places him or her into a level above the initial placement.
- The BEST Oral Interview, either long or short form, must also be administered to the learner in accordance with publisher's guidelines as part of the assessment process. The results of the BEST Oral Interview are to be used to guide instruction and measure learner advancements and will not be used as an NRS measure of educational gains.
- Learner demographic, assessment, goal preference, goal attainment, and attendance information must be entered monthly, as appropriate, to reflect current learner activity.
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Accommodations and adaptations in assessment

Help for people with learning disabilities and difficulties can take two forms: accommodations and adaptations. If a learner has a documented learning disability, it is generally in his or her interest to present the documentation to the program before assessment has taken place so that an appropriate *accommodation* can be made.

If, on the other hand, the learner does not have a documented disability but has discovered that he or she learns best through some adaptation of the instructional environment, that should also be made known to the program before the initial assessment takes place so that the *adaptation* can be made and accurate placement information can be obtained.

- Accommodations will be made for learners with documented learning disabilities and must be applied in conformance with the publisher's guidelines. Learners may document disability through professional evaluative documents from a psychologist or physician or school records.
- Adaptations for learners with learning difficulties may be given upon request and without a learning disabilities diagnosis. Suitable adaptations are colored transparent overlays, clear transparent overlays and a highlighter, temporary adhesives with spatial directions, earplugs, large print test edition (if available), magnifying device, priority seating, hats or caps to minimize the effects of fluorescent lighting, or an unmarked straightedge. Arizona Adult Education Services office will provide technical assistance to programs requesting help in determining appropriate adaptations.

Score ranges and placement for the BEST Literacy and Literacy Skills Tests

Below are the score ranges tied to educational functioning levels for placement and reporting gains for ELAA learners.

Level	Score
Beginning Literacy	0-7
Low Beginning ELAA	8-35
High Beginning ELAA	36-46
Low Intermediate ELAA	47-53
High Intermediate ELAA	54-65
Advanced ELAA	66-78*

Any test given after the initial test is considered a progress test. A learner may have multiple progress tests. Arizona advancements and NRS educational gains are determined by comparing the learner's initial assessment with the appropriate alternate form of the same level test.

Training

- ADE/AES staff will provide pre-service and in-service assessment training either in groups or one-on-one. ADE/AES will provide at least two group assessment trainings during each program year. During program year 2007-2008, these trainings will be held at the Adult Education Conference in December and at the Arizona Department of Education office in the late spring.
- Training will be provided to staff who either administer or score each of the tests used to measure educational gains.
- Additional training will be provided for teachers and other local staff involved in gathering, analyzing, compiling and reporting data.
- Training procedures and materials developed by ADE/AES will be used to train staff on
 - NRS requirement, accountability requirements, and the data collection process,
 - definitions of measures, and
 - standardized processes for conducting assessments.
- Pre-service and in-service staff training on assessment practices and uses is to be provided primarily by Arizona Adult Education Services and supported by training from local program trainers.

Resources for Information, Technical Assistance, and Test Purchase

Arizona Technical Assistance Requests and Assessment Requirement Questions:

Arizona Department of Education
Adult Education Services
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Website: <http://www.ade.az.gov/adult-ed/>

Assessment Purchase Procedures and Contacts

For the purchase of testing materials, local service providers should contact the test publishers associated with each required NRS eligible assessment directly. Providers are encouraged to carefully consider how their testing needs and testing volume will determine their choice of products and product packages.

BEST Literacy Test	TABE	
	<i>National and On-line</i>	<i>Local</i>
Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street NW Washington DC 20016-1859 Phone number: 1-866-845-2378 Email: bestliteracy@cal.org Website: http://www.cal.org/	CTB/McGraw-Hill Customer Services Dept. PO Box 881002 Indianapolis, IN 84208-1002 Toll Free: (800) 538-9547 FAX: (800) 282-0266 Online: www.CTB.com/TABE	Kelly Powell, Evaluation Consultant CTB McGraw-Hill (800) 538-9547 x6348 Kelly_powell@ctb.com

Notes:

- TABE 7/8 is no longer available for purchase. ADE/AES recommends that programs move toward retiring TABE 7/8 during PY 2008-2009.
- BEST Literacy Skills is no longer available for purchase. ADE/AES recommends that programs move toward exclusive use of the BEST Literacy Test during PY 2008-2009.